

ROCKY FLATS PLANT, GUARD TOWER
(Building 901)
SE corner of the protected area
Golden vicinity
Jefferson County
Colorado

HAER No. CO-83-J

HAER
COLO
30-GOLD.V
15-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
1849 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20240

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Note: The documentation for Building 901 also represents other guard towers, including buildings 375, 550, and 761.

Location: Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site, Highway 93, Golden, Jefferson County, Colorado. Guard tower 901 is located in the southeast corner of the Protected Area.

Significance: This building is a primary contributor to the Rocky Flats Plant historic district, associated with the U.S. strategy of nuclear military deterrence during the Cold War, a strategy considered of major importance in preventing Soviet nuclear attack. As the Cold War continued and concerns and fear escalated, security was tightened. In 1983, a Perimeter Security Zone was constructed around the Protected Area to enhance protection of plutonium operations. Building 901 is an integral part of the Perimeter Security Zone and built to monitor activities around the plutonium operations.

Description: Building 901 is 12' x 12' and 45' high (144 square feet). The building has an interior stairwell leading to an observation deck. The tower is brick and concrete with a concrete-on-metal roof. The structure has three levels. The first floor has a protected entrance and houses a transformer. Approximately 26' above the first level is an equipment room for electrical heating and air conditioning equipment. The observation deck is about 10' above the equipment room.

Buildings 375, 550, and 761 are similar in construction and size of Building 901.

History: In the 1970s and 1980s, security at the Rocky Flats Plant shifted its focus from espionage to the threat of terrorism and infiltration by protesters. The terrorist attack during the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich led the U.S. government to believe that trained terrorists could attack national defense facilities. A few years later, the plant also began to experience anti-nuclear demonstrations and rallies. In response, the protective force initiated riot control training and adopted a more offensive security posture (Richmond). In 1978, plans to install a \$5 million Perimeter Security Zone surrounding the plutonium operations buildings were developed. The Perimeter Security Zone, completed in 1983, consists of a double perimeter fence with closed circuit televisions, alarms, and an uninterrupted power supply. Security personnel were constantly on surveillance and provided verification of movement detected by the security system at the perimeter of the plutonium operations. Access into and out of the zone was controlled at three checkpoints.

Four guard towers were installed as part of the Perimeter Security Zone inside the inner fence. The towers provided security personnel with a clear, higher view in all directions, including the Protected Area, fence lines, and the buffer zone. Building 901 is located in the southeast corner of the Perimeter Security Zone. The other towers are located in the three remaining corners of the Perimeter Security Zone. Building 550 is in the southwest corner, Building 761 is in the northeast corner, and Building 375 is in the northwest corner.

Prior to construction of the Perimeter Security Zone, each of the production buildings had a separate "protected area." Fencing surrounded each building complex, as well as the entire Industrial Area. Production buildings outside the Perimeter Security Zone (beryllium and uranium) maintained separate "protected areas" until well after production stopped in 1989. The protective force controlled access into each building. Multiple layers of security were enforced throughout the site and at every production building.

The end of the Cold War and weapons production at the Rocky Flats Plant brought the end to site protests. The protective force has returned to a more defensive security posture (Richmond).

- Sources: Cunningham, Steve, employed at the Rocky Flats Plant since 1977 by the site contractor. Personnel communication, September 1997.
- Richmond, Lou, employed at Rocky Flats Plant since 1970 by the site security contractor. Personal communication, August 1997.
- United States Department of Energy. *Final Cultural Resources Survey Report (1995)*, by Science Applications International Corporation. Rocky Flats Repository. Golden, Colorado, 1995.
- United States Department of Energy. *Site Safety Analysis Report, Notebook 13-Security (1995)*, by EG&G Rocky Flats, Inc. Rocky Flats Repository. Golden, Colorado, 1995.

Historians: D. Jayne Aaron, Environmental Designer, engineering-environmental Management, Inc. (e²M), 1997. Judith Berryman, Ph.D., Archaeologist, e²M, 1997.